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AN ANSWER

to the

FIRST PART

of the

AGE OF REASON.

PRINTED IN 1794.

BY THOMAS TAYLOR, V. D. M.

*Seest thou a man wise in his own conceit? there is more hope of a fool,
than of him.*

Sol.

Ne sutor ultra crepidum.

Hov.

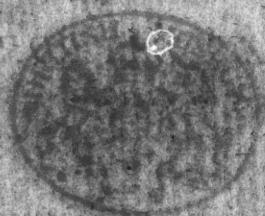


Manchester,

PRINTED AT S. NICHOLSON AND CO.'S OFFICE,
1, PALACE-STREET.

1796.

THE HISTORY OF
THE
REvolution



AN ANSWER, &c.

Mr. Paine's political writings have made a considerable stir in the nation, and have appeared of such consequence, that the legislative powers have thought proper to take them into serious consideration; and have interdicted their being sold, and also outlawed the author. The merit or demerit of those productions, is a circumstance I pretend to be no competent judge of, being no politician; the bent of my studies and labours lying in a different channel. Yet, I rather marvel, if those writings are so bad, that no one has stepped forward, and fairly confuted them; that would have been the most effectual way of preventing their doing harm, and of rendering them of none effect.

But let that matter be as it may; if Mr. P's political pamphlets be as pernicious as that which he calls, *The Age of Reason*, it would have been happy for the world if he had been laid in the dust three seven years ago. It is really calculated to do much harm amongst a large number of mankind. Not that there is any thing new advanced; they are the old thread-bare arguments, which he has vamped up again, dressed in a sort of ridiculous and buffoon stile, calculated to please the half-thinking witlings of the age, and furnish them matter of foolish laughter over their cups; stifling all serious reflexion, and confirming them in infidelity and profanity. In the mean time, there is a kind of sophistry, and the appearance of philosophy, which is vain, yet calculated to puzzle such as are weak, but simple-hearted and well-meaning, and may throw them into a kind of perplexity, which may prove their everlasting ruin. It is for the sake of such that I undertake to answer this piece of barefaced blasphemy.

I have made enquiry after a suitable answer to this profane

profane piece of drollery, but I have not seen any in these parts which is likely to be a proper antidote against the poison which it contains. I have seen several Remarks, but the writers have not taken sufficient notice of the evil it is likely to do; they see into the futility of it, but do not consider the many thousands who are likely to be ensnared, who are not capable of seeing as they do; and hence it is, that they have passed it over too lightly. There is one pamphlet, the author of which stiles himself a Churchman, which takes notice of some parts of the book in question, somewhat seriously; but even this does but touch upon here and there a passage, and upon these is too diffusive and declamatory, till it fatigues the reader. Besides, he is too tenacious of a party, which occasions him to launch out into things quite foreign to the matter in hand. Mr. P.'s book is not written against any denomination of Christians in particular, national or congregational, but against Christianity in general, the whole of revelation; so that it is a pity any well-meaning writer should enlarge so much upon that which is nothing to the purpose in answering him. He makes a jest of revelation, prophecies, or miracles; of course, the incarnation of our blessed Immanuel, his resurrection, his atonement and coming to judgment, are mere idle tales in his esteem.

As there is no method or order in Mr. P.'s performance, none can be observed in answering it. He rambles from one thing to another, as his fancy leads him; and therefore I must ramble after him, so must any one who intends to answer him to any good purpose. It will unavoidably swell my answer, in that I shall be under the necessity of quoting pretty large paragraphs from his book, to make my answers intelligible to such as have not his book by them; and I should be sorry that the poor should give eighteen-pence for his 55 pages, seeing, I am sure, they will receive no good from them, but likely to receive much harm.

What he says, page 1, of "compulsive systems of religion and compulsive articles," I heartily agree to; I believe they have a tendency to destroy morality, sincerity, and truth; but then they have nothing to do with Christianity; neither Christ nor his apostles made any such systems or articles; they are antichristian, and

have no part or lot in the matter at all. Most of what is said, page 2, may pass, only "his own mind being his own church," is a loose, vague saying, and rather shews an unprincipled mind. A true theology will produce a true morality. I sincerely believe that compulsive creeds have a tendency to make men subscribe to articles which they do not believe; but still those compulsive creeds are out of the question. All that Mr. P. says, concerning the making religion a political matter, is too true; only he must know, that religion will teach us to live peaceably under the government which our Maker has placed us, and to obey our governors, except they require us to disobey our Maker. I can tell Mr. P. in a few words, what real Christianity is; and that is, to love the Lord my God with all my heart, and my neighbour as myself. This is religion, and if Mr. P. can obtain this religion any other way, than as the Christians do, let him. The Christian obtains this religion by believing in the Son of God, and in believing he finds life in his name.

Page 3, he is open and frank, in telling us, that he neither believes Moses, nor Jesus Christ, nor Mahomet. But has he not substituted something as bad as any of them? Ibid, he is partly right in his notion of revelation, and partly wrong. "Revelation, when applied to religion, means something communicated immediately from God." It is so, but not to every individual person, nor is there any necessity it should; for when it has been sufficiently authenticated, that a leading truth has been communicated, or revealed to one or more persons, and that truth is faithfully recorded, there is no need that God should be revealing it to every individual. We all believe there were such men as Alexander the Great, Julius Cæsar, Charles the fifth, and that they gained those victories which are ascribed to them, though we never saw the men, nor their armies, nor the battles they fought. But why do we believe there were such identical men, and that they performed those military achievements? because their histories were written in detail by such as were eye-witnesses, and the aggregate has been compiled by faithful historians from sufficient documents, and has been handed down to the present age. In like manner we believe there were such

such cities as *Babylon, Ninevah, Carthage, or Palmyra*, but we never saw those famous cities; we must believe upon similar evidence. And thus I apprehend there is nothing unreasonable in believing the great truths recorded in the Bible, and the authenticity of those things therein.

Page 4, "When Moses told the children of Israel, that he received the two tables of the commandments from the hand of God, they were not obliged to believe him; because they had no other authority for it, but his telling them so." How does Mr. P. prove that? Can he bring us no better evidence, than his bold contradiction? To say nothing that God's own hand-writing would be no small evidence, as we may suppose it would greatly differ from that of Moses; and might carry its own evidence to the children of Israel. I say, passing that by; were those dreadful flashes of lightning, and the sound of the trumpet, and the voice of God Almighty himself, (a) no evidence of his intercourse with the Deity? did not Moses appeal to themselves, as witnesses of the Almighty speaking with them face to face? (b) Had they not seen those signs in Egypt, and the wonders wrought for their deliverance? Were not these sufficient vouchers for the mission of Moses? Had they seen a sea dried up before them, and their enraged enemies destroyed? That God fed them with manna, and brought them water from a rock? Did he go before them in a pillar of a cloud by day, and a pillar of fire by night? And could several millions of people be deceived in all this? Does he not rehearse the whole to them in the book of Deuteronomy, and appeal to themselves; not to their children, but to themselves? And would it not have been the greatest wonder of all, if they had remained infidels still?

Ibid. He allows the commands have some good moral precepts; but, in a note objects to *God visiting the iniquities of the fathers upon the children*. As this declaration is often objected to, it may not be amiss to spend a few words upon it. God is sometimes said to do a thing, when he permits it to be done; thus he is said to have hardened the heart of Pharaoh, that is, he permitted it to be hardened. As he is said to have put a lying

(a) Exod. xix. 18, 19.

(b) Deut. v. 5.

lying spirit into the mouths of Ahab's false prophets: that is, he permitted a wicked spirit, who offered his service, to go and influence all those wretches to prophecy as they did, to bring destruction upon the long-provoking Ahab. (c) Thus it is in God visiting the sins of the fathers upon the children; the children feel the effects of their parent's sins; thus an extravagant parent squanders away his substance in riot and intemperance, and reduces his children to want and beggary; is not that want the effect of the father's sins? Another, by his debaucheries and lewdness, contaminates his frame, corrupts his whole mass of blood, and communicates this disease, or the effects of it, to his offspring, which perhaps may descend to future generations: I think in such cases, and various others, the sins of the parents are awfully visited upon the children; and I apprehend this is the sense in which we are to understand the words in Exodus.

Ibid. He tries to be witty upon the birth of our blessed Lord, not to say profane. "It is, however, not difficult to account for the credit that was given to the story of Jesus Christ being the Son of God. He was born when heathen mythology had still some fashion and repute in the world; and that mythology had prepared the people for the belief of such a story." "Almost all the extraordinary men that lived under the heathen mythology, were reputed to be the sons of some of their gods." From hence we are informed, that the "Christian church sprung out of the tail of heathen mythology," page 5; that is, that Christianity was the offspring of the heathen mythology. If that was the case, the heathen treated their offspring very cruelly. Let any one read the Acts of the Apostles, or St. Paul's epistles to the Corinthians, Thessalonians, and to Timothy; if Mr. P. will not credit these, let him get some one to translate Tacitus, or Pliny, as he will most likely believe them, sooner than the Scriptures, which, he says, "he detests," and he will see, that the Heathen had no very great liking to the Christians; nor had the Christians, or their teachers, any very great temptations to ape the heathen in their mythology. Mr. P. wants to make the world believe that Christianity

(c) 1 Kings xxii. 23.

Christianity is a fraud, an imposture, dressed up to deceive mankind. But what were the Christians to gain by it? the design of all cheats and impostors, is that of profit or honour. But which of these could the first Christians have in view? Will Mr. P. believe what one of the primitive Christians writes? *Even to the present hour, we both hunger, and thirst, and are naked, and are buffeted, and have no certain dwelling-place; and labour, working with our own hands; being reviled, we bless; being persecuted, we suffer it; being defamed, we entreat; we are made the filth of the world, and the offscouring of all things.* I have some cause to doubt, if even Mr. P. would endure half of the above, even for the *Rights of Man*, or his invention of the *Age of Reason*. Our author professes to believe "that our Saviour was a virtuous and amiable man," page 5. Hence we may suppose that he believes there was such a man. But then, this virtuous and amiable man, declares himself to be more than a man. *I and my Father, said he, are one.* Then the Jews took up stones to stone him for a blasphemer; and what would they have stoned him for? *that being a man, he made himself God.* Now Mr. P. professes too much candour to stone a person on such account; but then he would put a fool's coat upon him, and set him up as a laughing-stock; that is, he would not treat our Lord as a blasphemer, but like Herod and his men of war, set him at naught, and mock him as a poor innocent idiot. Or he will do him the honour to rank him with one of Jupiter's bastards; for in such wise he treats the miraculous conception of our adorable Immanuel. Ibid. "Jesus Christ wrote no account of himself, of his birth, his parentage, or any thing else." Well, what of that? Mr. P. would not have believed him if he had. But is the testimony of any one the less valid, because it comes not from the person himself, but from others? Let any of our courts of judicature testify, do they not call in the evidences of others, and not the persons themselves? The fact is, some times our Lord did speak for himself; but more generally he either appealed to his works, or to such as heard him speak. As he said to Pilate, *why askest thou me? ask them that heard me.*

As touching the pre-existent state of our Lord's human

man soul, and consequently, his miraculous conception, which our author ridicules, let a few of his own sayings be attended to; for we may suppose he will believe him, seeing he "avows that he preached and practised the most benevolent morality, such as is not excelled by Confucius, nor the Greek philosophers, no, nor even by the Quakers." ¹⁰ I came down from heaven, says the Saviour, not to do my own will, but the will of him that sent me. (d) Say you of him whom the Father hath sent and sanctified, thou blasphemest, because I said, I am the Son of God? (e) And now, O Father, glorify thou me with thine own self, with the glory which I had, with thee before the world was. (f) Such are the sayings of him, whom Mr. P. allows preached and practised a pure morality, and yet attempts to make his miraculous conception both indelicate and ridiculous; and puts it upon a level with all the vile and impure legends we find among the heathen. I wish to give this author credit for what he says, namely, "that he believes Jesus Christ was a good man, and that he lived and taught the purest morality." Let me just quote a few sayings more from this divine teacher. For the bread of God is he which cometh down from heaven (that is himself), and giveth his life for the world. I am the bread of life: he that cometh unto me, shall never hunger; and he that believeth on me, shall never thirst. I am the living bread which came down from heaven; if any man eat of this bread, he shall live for ever; and the bread which I give is my flesh, which I give for the life of the world. Except ye eat the flesh of the Son of Man, and drink his blood, ye have no life. Whoso eateth my flesh, and drinketh my blood, hath eternal life, and I will raise him up at the last day. For my flesh is meat indeed; and my blood is drink indeed. He that eateth my flesh, and drinketh my blood, dwelleth in me, and I in him. (g) Yet, further, this divine teacher says, the Son of Man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give his life a ransom for many. (h) He that hath seen me, hath seen the Father also. (i) All mine are thine, and thine are mine, and I am glorified in them. (k) I should not have quoted these Scriptures, had not Mr. P. declared that he believeth

(d) John, vi. 38.

(g) John, vi. 32—58.

(k) John, chap. xvii. 10.

(e) Chap. x. 36.

(h) Matt. xx. 28.

(f) Chap. xvii. 5.

(i) John, xiv.

lieveth our Lord taught and lived the most pure morality. Now if any one lives and teaches pure morality, his morality must be true; yea, and whatever doctrine he teaches must be true, otherwise he is a false teacher, and therefore no good moralist. In the above few Scriptures are contained our blessed Lord's divinity, his miraculous conception, and his blessed atonement for our offences. It remains then, if our Saviour is a true teacher, Mr. P. is a ridiculous, drolling, daring blasphemer of Jehovah, and his ever blessed Christ.

As our author has been very jocular upon our Saviour's conception, he affects to be still more so upon his resurrection. Page 6, "the miraculous conception was not a thing which admitted of publicity; and therefore the tellers of this part of the story had this advantage, that though they might not be credited, they could not be detected. But the resurrection of a dead person from the grave, and his ascension through the air, is a thing very different as to the evidence it admits of, to the invisible conception of a child in the womb. The resurrection and ascension, supposing them to have taken place, admitted of public and ocular demonstration, like that of the ascension of a balloon, or the sun at noon-day, to all Jerusalem at least. Instead of this, a small number of persons, not more than eight or nine, are introduced as proxies for the whole world to say they *saw it*, and all the rest of the world are called to believe it."

Mr. P. it seems believes that eight or nine persons did declare his resurrection. And are not eight or nine responsible witnesses sufficient? Does the law require more than three; nay, will not two witnesses be sufficient, even in criminal matters? Why then should eight or nine, in this case, have been thought too few? But if numbers will avail, we are told, that he appeared to five hundred; yea, and the writer declared, the greater part of them were alive at the time of his writing. It seems Mr. P. believes that our Lord was really crucified, as well as the Jews; and I never met with one that doubted it; and as he had told them he would rise again the third day, they remembered it, and took care to secure the sepulchre, by rolling a great stone, and setting a watch, yea a watch of their own chusing.

chusing. *Ye have a watch, (said Pilate) go and make it secure.* This we may suppose they did. Now if our Lord did not rise, why did they not expose his body? Why did they not carry it in triumph through the city, and expose it in the most public manner? that would have knocked the matter on the head at once. But instead of that, a senseless tale is invented, which even Mr. P. seems to pay little attention to. *His disciples came and stole him away while the guard fell asleep.* Was it likely the whole guard should fall asleep? That was death by the Roman military law; or if they were asleep, could they be sure that the disciples, or any person else stole him from the sepulchre? Were the resurrection founded on no better evidence, it would be deservedly exploded.

The next thing which our author makes himself very merry with, is the rebellion of Satan and his angels: and here he has found something that matches it to a tittle, in his heathen mythology, page 7, especially in the war with the giants and Jupiter; and the angry god, "taking one of them, and placing him under Mount Etna." Now his application—"thus the Christian mythologists tell us their Satan made war against the Almighty, who defeated him, and confined him afterwards, not under a mountain, but in a pit."

The Christian mythologists tell us no such thing; they inform us, he will be shut up, that he should deceive the nations no more; but at present they inform us that he is going about as a roaring lion, seeking whom he may devour. But Mr. P. seems conscious of his having made a trip, and therefore adds what we call a lie to mend the matter.

Page 8. "The Christian mythologists, after having confined Satan in the pit, were obliged to let him out again, to bring on the sequel of their fable."

The Christians deny both one and the other. Let Mr. P. shew us in what part of either the Old or New Testament, either one or the other is found; and if he cannot find these romances, let him acknowledge that he is a forger of lies, yea, sporting himself with his own deceivings. Ibid, he is wonderfully pleased with his own conceit of "the snake, Eve, and the apple." We have it repeatedly told; and to let us know that he has

has learned a bit of French, he tells us, "that the snake and Eve entered into a *tête à tête*, the issue of which was the snake persuaded her to eat an apple; which damns all mankind." What a thing it is to be learned! But who told our author that it was an apple which Eve eat? or that in eating this apple, she damned all mankind? Is not this another of our author's waking dreams?

Ibid. He tells us a secret, namely, that "church mythologists cannot do without Satan, and that they are so fond of his company, they bribe him to stay with them. They promised him *all* the Jews, *all* the Turks, and, by anticipation, *nine-tenths* of the world beside, and Mahomet into the bargain. After this, who can doubt the bountifulness of the Christian mythology?"

But I ask again, in what part of the Bible is this profane drollery written? This author professes to believe our Lord's morality; if so, let him hear what he says, *every idle word that men shall speak, they shall give account thereof in the day of judgment.* And if every idle word shall be called to an account, what shall we say for a man that sits down and writes deliberate lies, on purpose to ridicule the Word of God, and endeavours to make it of none effect.

What he says of Satan's omnipresence, page 9, is of a-piece with the rest. "After his fall, according to their account," that is, the Christians, "he became omnipresent. He exists every where at the same time. He occupies the whole immensity of space." Now where is this written? In what book, or chapter, or verse of the Bible, is this horrible lie written? The Christian has great cause to believe that Satan and his hellish associates are so numerous, as to tempt mankind in whatever quarter of the globe they may inhabit.

Ibid. "Not content with the deification of Satan, they represent him as defeating by stratagem, in the shape of an animal of the creation, all the power and wisdom of the Almighty." This is another falsehood: they do no such thing. In what part of the Bible is this falsehood written? Satan is called by an horrible sublime title, *the god of this world*, because he is obeyed by the men of this world; but that is not making him superior to the Almighty. Ibid. "There are also many,

who

who have been so enthusiastically enraptured by what they conceived to be the infinite love of God to man, that it has deterred them from examining into the absurdity and profaneness of the story."

Part of this is a glorious truth; there "have been many," and I hope there will be more, who have been sweetly "enraptured with the love of God to men," yea, to themselves, feeling his love shed abroad in their hearts; but it has not deterred them from examining into the nature and ground of this love, and they could see neither absurdity nor profaneness in the glorious mystery. Mr. P. is a stranger to this love, and therefore is a very incompetent judge in the matter. He speaks highly of the great Sir Isaac Newton: I will venture to relate an anecdote concerning him. Being in company with a brother philosopher, one of Mr. P.'s creed, (for he has a creed) and the gentleman was treating revelation, as Mr. P. does. The Christian philosopher took the gentleman up short. "Dr. H." said he, "when you speak of astronomy, I love to hear you, because I know you understand it; but as to Christianity, I know what that is, and I am certain that you know nothing of the matter." Christianity has had much sharper sighted enemies to contend with than even Mr. P. who have thought it worth their while to treat the subject seriously; Mr. P. has added nothing to their discoveries, except his profane levity. The real Christian is so far from being deterred from examining into the nature and grounds of Christianity, that he does it daily; yea, and into his own experience also; and he finds neither profaneness nor absurdity therein. He now comes to what he calls his examination of the authenticity of the books which compose the Old and New Testament.

Page 11. "The church mythologists," as he calls them, "decided by vote which of the books out of the collection they had made, should be THE WORD OF GOD, and which should not. They rejected several; they voted others to be doubtful, such as the books called the Apocrypha; and those books which had the majority of votes, were voted to be the Word of God."

Is this reasoning? Is this buffoonery to pass for proof?

Here we have nothing but our master's *ipse dixit*. Indeed, he tells us a few lines further, that he has been forging a story without book. For he says, "who the people were that did all this," that is, that thus voted, "we know nothing of; they called themselves by the name of the church, and this is all we know of the matter." Now let Mr. P. bring such an evidence as this into a court of justice, first barefacedly to aver a thing, and then in the very next sentence declare that he knows nothing of the matter! Let him go into the American congress; or into the conventions at Paris, and bring such an evidence, and would not the former honour him with the tail of a cart, and flog him through the streets; and would not the latter make a quicker dispatch at the guillotine? He next endeavours, in his way, to pun upon the word *revelation*, intimating, that "we need no revelation to tell us that Sampson ran away with the gates, or visited Dalilah, or caught his foxes; such things have no need of revelation." Who says they have? "We ought to feel shame in calling such paltry stories the Word of God."

The matter in the case of Sampson, is simply this: the Almighty raised him up, and gave him power sufficient to have delivered his countrymen from the oppression of the Philistines. He, through giving way to his passions, failed in a great degree, was unfaithful to what was committed unto him; that we might know this, we are made acquainted with several private transactions in his life, and in the narration, the circumstances of his taking the gates of Gaza, the foxes, &c. are brought in, and might be delivered by a credible witness; and what is there in the whole which is so paltry? various other things of a similar nature occur in the history of the Bible, which in themselves are of no very great moment, and yet in narration may be necessary. All which this author objects to the historical part of the Bible, may be objected to the most approved history that was ever written; yea, and every history may be represented in a most ridiculous light, by a disingenuous witling taking detached fragments from it, and holding them up as an object of scorn and ridicule. But is such a conduct honest? Nay, I say again, it is like Herod and his men of war, arraying

arraying our Lord in mock royalty, and making a derision of him.

Our author next tries his talent of ridicule upon the Mosaic account of the creation, page 12. "It begins abruptly. It is nobody that speaks. It is nobody that hears. It is addressed to nobody." However, "if it is nobody that speaks," it is somebody that writes, and many persons read, even Mr. P. himself it seems, and it is addressed to the whole world. Perhaps one might say, the author did wisely in concealing his name, or Mr. P. would have thrown a squib at him. But have not some of the most celebrated authors begun full as abruptly? Does not Homer begin his *Iliad*, and Virgil his *Eneid* abruptly? Does not Cæsar begin his *Commentaries* abruptly? Did any one ever find fault with them for it? The first chapter in *Genesis*, is a noble, sublime, yet concise history of the creation; and has been justly admired by many of the literati of the first magnitude, and will be read with veneration and esteem, when Mr. P. and his buffoonery, are quite forgotten. "He doubts very much," or rather seems confident, "that the books ascribed to Moses were none of his;" but as he offers no other proof, than that "Moses not being an Israelite, and the Jews honoured him, in ascribing them to him, he did not chuse to contradict the tradition," page 12. But who told Mr. P. that Moses was not an Israelite? We have his pedigree up to Jacob or Israel, *Exod.* vi. 16—18. Nor can we suppose that Moses thought it such "a vile obscene legend," as our author represents it, if he was only willing to pass for its author, for such he represents the historical part of the Bible.

"Whenever we read the obscene stories, the voluptuous debaucheries, the cruel and torturous executions, the unrelenting vindictiveness, with which more than half the Bible is filled, it would be more consistent that we call it the word of a demon, than the Word of God. It is a history of wickedness, that has served to corrupt and brutalize men; and for my own part, I sincerely detest it, as I detest every thing that is cruel." That Mr. P. detests the Bible, there is no doubt; but it may be no worse for that. As for the "obscene stories, voluptuous debaucheries, and cruel and torturous executions,"

“tions,” &c. that is what we find in all histories, even in that of England. An historian must give a true narrative; such is the case with the sacred historians. They are impartial, not concealing the faults of their own nation, nor even their own faults. Had the history of the Bible been otherwise, we should have great cause to doubt its authenticity. As to his drollery concerning the Israelites being “world-makers,” &c. it is a gross misrepresentation. Moses does not set up for a *world-maker*, but he tells who made the world, and how he made it; God spake, and it was done; he said, Let there be light, and there was light. This is the plain matter of fact, and what absurdity is there in it? In short, Bible history, is a true history, it corresponds with its doctrines, and both are confirmed by woeful experience.

Whoever writes the Revolution in France, must he not exhibit a dreadful scene of murder and cruelty? If he writes what was before the Revolution, must he not describe many, very many voluptuous debaucheries, and cruel and torturous executions, far more than are found in the Bible history; but must the historian be to blame for that? Our author's doctrine is well calculated to promote voluptuous debaucheries, and what men of that stamp will heartily receive; and what will suit this age of voluptuous debaucheries, which our wise author has found out to be the “Age of Reason.”

Page 13. Our author allows the “book of Job has a great deal of elevated sentiment, reverentially expressed, of the power and benignity of the Almighty.” It would have been well if he had imitated it. “But” it seems “that book stands on no higher rank than many other compositions on similar subjects, as well before, as since that time.” *Magister decit* again. But can he tell us what compositions were written before the book of Job? Has this bold assertor seen any? If he has, why does he not tell us the names of the authors? If he cannot, what sort of credit is to be given to him?

We are now entertained with a long dissertation upon prophesying, and are told the Jewish prophets were a “sort of itinerant preachers,” and if I understand his meaning, a sort of ballad-singers, “and mixed poetry, anecdote, and devotion together;” and after a good deal

of burlesque in the same strain, we are told, the word prophet means the art of making poetry; and, as he must be Jack of all trades, has given us a specimen of his own skill in prophesying, and is bold enough to tell us, there is not a word in all the Bible that "describes to us what we call a poet." And yet the "Jewish prophets were nothing else but poets." The man that can make such jargon hang together, has my full consent. But Mr. P. is mistaken, there are words in the book which we call the Bible, which signify poets and poetry. The word נֶזֶב 2 Sam. xxiii. 1: signifies a poet, and the word שִׁיר signifies song, poem, or poetry, and so the word שִׁיר has the same meaning. Nor do any of these words signify a prophet, or prophecy. To confirm his assertion, he tells us, that "Deborah and Barak are called prophets." They are not. Deborah is called נָבָתָה Judges iv. 4: a woman prophetess; but Barak is nowhere either stiled prophet or prophetess.

Page 15. But, it seems, "Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, are not called prophets." Why? "because they could not sing, or play music, or make poetry." But Mr. P. can make poetry; of course, he is a greater man than Abraham, Isaac, or Jacob; yea, and he can write lies too. For Abraham is called נָבָי Gen. xx. 17. the word, and the only word, as far as I can remember, that is ever rendered prophet; and if Mr. P. will learn a little Hebrew, he will find Jacob to have been no bad poet, if he will read xliiith of Genesis. Jonas is called a prophet, but his message to the Ninevites is not delivered in poetry. Elijah and Elisha are called prophets, and we read of no singing or poetry performed by them. Nay, it is most likely the latter could not play, for we read that he called for a minstrel, and when the minstrel played, the hand of the Lord was upon him, 2 Kings, iii. 15.

I think our Lord intimates, Luke xiii. 28. as if Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, were all prophets. The matter is, the word prophet is used in a general sense in our language, for praising God, or preaching; but the word נָבָי always means foretelling future events, and if its original meaning has been mistaken, it has been so by such commentators as Mr. P. His drollery concerning "the greater and lesser prophets," scarcely deserves a serious answer; their being called greater or less, is simply on account

of the length and shortness of their prophecies. It may not be amiss to look back to his note, page 14. There is a misrepresentation both in his text and note. In his text he says, “*an evil spirit from God* came upon Saul, and he prophesied.” Hence he would make us believe, that Saul’s prophesying was in consequence of an evil spirit from God coming upon him; whereas it is not in that place said that an *evil* spirit from God came upon him; but rather a good spirit came upon him. He came to that place with an intention to kill David, and perhaps all who were with him; but when the spirit from God came upon him, he was for the present changed, and joined in the solemn worship of God. (1) In his note, he says, “as these men, who call themselves divines and commentators, are very fond of puzzling one another, I leave them to contest the meaning of the first part of the phrase, that of *an evil spirit of God*. I keep to my text.” I think you do not. I think there is a difference between *an evil spirit from God*, and *an evil spirit of God*. The former is found, but not in the connection in which you put it; but I believe you will be hard set to find the latter, *viz. an evil spirit of God*, in all the Bible. The places where it is said *an evil spirit from God* came upon Saul, are 1 Sam. xvi. 14, 15. and chap. xviii. 10. If we understand the words מִן־שָׁוֹן rendered *evil spirit*, to signify an evil agent, it only signifies, that evil spirits are ever ready to execute God’s righteous judgments upon obstinate sinners, or sometimes permits them to try his saints. Job 2. first chap. 2 Cor. xiii. 7. 1 Kings xxii. 21, 22. Luke xxii. 31.

In short, though the English word prophet, sometimes signifies to preach, or praise God, yet the word נָבָן is the proper word for prophet, and the word נָבָרֶךְ is the proper word for prophesying, and I believe their strict and proper sense is predicting future events; and if any one will be at the pains of reading Bishop Newton on the Prophecies, he will see how exactly the prophecies and their accomplishment tally; and thereby is the truth of prophecy confirmed, in spite of all that this profane railler, or any of his sort can say. And had he read his Bible with reverence and care, he would have found something in it besides “a collection of

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the most paltry and contemptible tales." He would have found the noblest thoughts, delivered in the most sublime language ; such as neither Voltaire, nor his pupil, the author of the Age of Reason, will ever be masters of. He would have found the best philosophy, and soundest morality, even the words of eternal life. Having made the Old Testament as ridiculous as Herod made our Saviour, he goes on to try his talent in lampooning the New.

"Thus much for the Bible, I go on now to the book called, the New Testament. The New Testament ! that is, the *new will*, as if there could be two wills of the Creator," page 16. It is called the New Testament, because it has been given since the Old ; and because the dispensation, or outward mode, in many things is changed ; the types are fulfilled, and therefore cease. He of whom Moses and the prophets did testify, is come, and put away sin by the sacrifice of himself. All this is no "new will," or change in the Deity ; but a blessed fulfilment of his own gracious designs to the ruined children of men. Hence there is no "new religion ;" religion is invariably the same from the beginning. On that account our blessed Saviour had no need to write, or procure to be written, any thing ; for he was the grand fulfiller of types and prophecies, seeing it was to him that all the prophets gave witness.

Page 16. "The four first books, called Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John, do not give the history of the life of Jesus Christ." They give as much as is necessary ; and much more than Mr. P. believes. "It appears from these books, that the whole time of his being a preacher, was not more than eighteen months." Well, and what of that ? then he did much in a little time. However, it appears from these books, that from the time of his baptism, the time he began his public ministry, to the time of his death, was three years.

Page 17. Mr. P. is still acting the Herod. "Moses was a foundling, Jesus Christ was born in a stable, and Mahomet was a mule-driver." Well, and how then ? Must his great condescension be turned into ridicule ? Is it not prophesied of him, that he should be despised and rejected of men ? And is not Mr. P. making it good ?

good? The whole of this page is a scurrilous attempt to degrade the Lord of life and glory.

Ibid. "The Christian mythologists tell us, that Christ died for the sins of the world, and that he came on purpose to die." And did not Christ himself tell us so? And Mr. Paine says, "he taught the purest morality." Did he not say, *the Son of Man came not to be ministered to, but to minister, and to give his life for many?* The manner of his death is an objection in our wise author's way, page 18. "Would it not have been the same, if he had died of a fever, or of the small-pox, of old age, or any thing else?—A fever would have done as well as the cross, if there were any occasion for either." Nay, it would not; because it was foretold that he should die the death of the cross, Psalm xxii. 16, 17. Zech. xii. 10. Our Lord himself frequently told his disciples what manner of death he should die. Had our blessed Lord "died of a fever, small-pox, or old age," our author would have been witty indeed; but every circumstance in his death, even to minuteness, is so exactly marked, that our witling must needs seek for something else to act the droll upon.

Page 18. "St. Paul is a quibbler." Why so? "because he makes two Adams." Nay, not he; so far from making two Adams, he never made one in his life. He indeed speaks of two Adams, one whose sin brought death into the world, and all our woe; and of another, whom by an accommodation as a public head, he calls Adam, and by whom life and immortality are brought to light. The quibble in the same page, upon the word death, or die, is not worth a serious answer.

Page 19. "Revelation is out of the question, with respect to those books; not only because of the disagreement of the writers, but because revelation cannot be applied to the relating of facts by the persons who saw them done." If the persons saw them done, then were they real facts, and that is sufficient to our purpose, and such things as they relate, the life and miracles of Christ, his death and resurrection, and ascension, are far from being "paltry and contemptible tales." As for the disagreement of the writers, it is so small, and the things in which they differ, so trivial, that it affects not the merits of the cause at all. If it did, we should

should have heard of it in the *Age of Reason*. The difference is little more, than relating the same things in different words. Several persons have written the life of the late King of Prussia, and have said the same things in different words; and some have added circumstances, which others have omitted. It is, indeed, a lamentable truth, that what is called Christianity, "has set up a religion of pomp and of revenue, in pretended imitation of a person, whose life was humility and poverty." But then the book, which Mr. P. vilifies with such boldness, has nothing to do in the matter at all; nor has it any thing to do with the "old stories" which he speaks of. The Author of true Christianity says, *Learn of me, for I am meek and lowly in heart. He that will be greatest among you, let him become least of all, and servant of all.* And "that quibbler, St. Paul," as our author calls him, says, *Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus.*

"As to the invention of purgatory, releasing souls from thence by prayers, selling of pardons, dispensations, and indulgences," &c. the true Christian thinks as meanly of them, as our author can; but denies their origin to be from the crucifixion, or, as our author words it, the "paroxysms of the crucifixion." Therefore, all the cant expressions of "manufacturing, fabricating, &c." have no existence, except in the author's manufacturing and fabricating brain. St. Paul says, *there is one God, and one Mediator between God and man, the man Christ Jesus*, a glorious truth, which will stand, when Mr. P. and his *Age of Reason*, are totally forgotten. It is an eternal truth, *that God so loved the world, that he gave his only-begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him, might not perish, but have eternal life.* A truth as full of wisdom, as Mr. P.'s book is of folly. It is perfectly consistent with the wisdom, the justice, and sovereignty of God, and what worm of the earth has any right to say to Infinite Wisdom, *What dost thou?* Christ freely laid down his life; he freely laid it down, and he freely resumed it again; and must this glorious instance of love, which astonishes heaven, confounds hell, and gives life to the ruined sinner, be the subject of low wit, idle drollery, and a subject for a set of poor drunkards to swear and laugh over at an alehouse? If

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our author would set up for a wise man, would he not wait till he understands a subject, before he attempts to play the buffoon over it. That Christ died for my sins, and that he ever lives to make intercession for me, constitutes the ground of all my hope; and I am sure, if properly received, will produce the purest morality in the universe. It will produce pure love to God and man. It will teach men to do justly, love mercy, and to walk humbly with God. He, the Christian, does not "go cringing to intermediate beings;" no, he comes boldly to the throne of grace, that he may obtain mercy, and find grace to help him in time of need. Nor does he despise reason, though he does not think it "the choicest gift of God;" the gift of Christ is "the choicest gift;" but still the Christian believes every thing pertaining to the essential worship of the Deity to be reasonable. It is reasonable that I should allow my Creator to be wiser than myself, and that his providence far excels my capacity; and that he is not obliged to account to any of his creatures for his proceedings, although they should be above their comprehension. It is reasonable that I should love him, and abstain from those things which I know are displeasing to him. As I am a poor, weak, and ignorant sinner, it is reasonable that I should ask of him wisdom, pardon, and strength, seeing he giveth liberally to all, and upbraideth none. Nor is this "directing the Almighty." Page 21, he finds great fault with a poor creature making his application thus to the Divine Creator. "He," that is man, "takes on himself to direct the Almighty what to do, even in the government of the universe." How so? "When it is sun-shine, he prays for rain, and when it is rain, he prays for sun-shine." "What is the amount of all his prayers, but to make the Almighty change his mind, and act otherwise than he does?" How vile is all this! What a vile burlesque upon every part of positive worship. Does this gentleman believe there is any such being as the Almighty? It is true, he says he does; but we have only his own word for it. He owns our Lord "taught the purest morality," and one part of his teaching was how we should pray, and has been pleased to give us a divine platform of prayer; yea, has taught us, by a striking parable, to pray, and not to faint, Luke xviii.

1. In a time of great drought, may we not ask the blessing of rain? In the time of long rain, may we not ask the blessing of sun-shine, that the Almighty may give us the appointed weeks of harvest? We do not live in an age, in which men are righteous over much, or are over eager of prayer.

Page 22. He must have another attack upon revelation, "The Word of God is the creation we behold." Not so; that is the work of God, and the believer sees as much of the wisdom and goodness of the Deity in the creation, as Mr. P. or any other infidel. As to his paltry criticism of "Jesus Christ being sent to publish glad-tidings from one end of the earth to the other, and the earth be round, and has no end," it is not worth a serious answer. Certain modes of speech are ever allowed, which are not strictly philosophical. When eyes and hands are attributed to the Deity, we know it is not strictly philosophical; but would any but a snarling cynic take any advantage from thence? So that our critic might have saved his genteel flourish of "the world's Saviour believing the world to be flat like a trencher," &c. The phrase, from one end of the earth to the other, is a common idiom of speech, to signify the greatest distance. So the rising and setting sun, is a common phrase, though we know as well as Mr. P. can tell us, that the sun neither rises nor sets; yet it is said to rise at such an hour, and set at such an hour, even in our almanacks. Why does not Mr. P. witcise upon them?

Ibid. But how was Jesus Christ to make any thing known to all nations? he could but speak one language, which was Hebrew." How do you prove that? We poor idiots believe that he knew the very thoughts of men's hearts; and if so, he knew, and still knows their words when they speak, let the language be what it will. All that Mr. P. or any body else can speak of creation, as the work of God, we firmly believe. We see and admire his power and providence in the same. But although our author avers "Jesus Christ taught the purest morality," yet he ventures to contradict him. Our Lord says, *search the Scriptures*.

Page 23. "Do we want to know what God is? Search not the book called the *Scriptures*, but the *Scriptures* called

called the creation." Is not this daring? But where is creation called Scripture?

Ibid. "The only idea man can affix to the name of God, is that of a first cause, the cause of all things." The idea that a Christian affixes to the name Jehovah, the incommunicable name of the Deity, is, he that was, and is, and shall be for ever; that he is gracious, merciful, long-suffering, and abundant in goodness and truth. Moreover, we have an idea that he is holy and just, and will reward every man according to his works.

Page 24. "How is it that those people pretend to reject reason?" What people? Not the real Christian, as has been proved above; he is the only person that lives agreeable to reason. Mr. P.'s disciples are not living agreeable to reason; many of these are spending the Lord's-day in drinking what should support their families, and pay their debts, and laughing the poor Christian to scorn, who is answering the end of his creation.

Our author can "recollect only some chapters in Job, and the 19th Psalm, which convey to us any idea of God, in the book called the Bible." And how can we help that? He should read better. I am glad he is so pleased with the 19th Psalm, and with Mr. Addison's version of that beautiful psalm, I assure him, I highly admire them both. And as Mr. P. has read Mr. Addison's poetical works, has he never read his Evidences of Christianity? If he has not, is he excusable? And if he has, ought he not to have answered some of his arguments? Moreover, in the above psalm, there are some other things besides the works of creation, spoken of in the highest terms of respect and veneration: I read with delight what follows; *the law of the Lord is perfect, converting the soul; the testimony of the Lord is sure, making wise the simple. The statutes of the Lord are right, rejoicing the heart: the commandment of the Lord is pure, enlightening the eyes. The fear of the Lord is clean, enduring for ever: the judgments of the Lord are true, and righteous altogether.* More to be desired are they than gold, yea, than much fine gold, sweeter, also, than honey, or the honey-comb. Moreover, *by them is thy servant warned; and in keeping of them there is great reward.* Such is the charming account which the Psalmist gives of that blessed

blessed book, which our author treats with such unparalleled contempt.

Page 26. "I cannot recollect a single passage in all the writings ascribed to the men called apostles, that conveys any idea of what God is." Can you not? more shame to you; it seems you have read them very poorly. Then give me leave to help you. *God that made the world, and all things therein, seeing that he is Lord of heaven and earth, dwelleth not in temples made with hands. He giveth to all life and breath, and all things. And hath made of one blood, all nations of men, for to dwell on all the face of the earth, and hath determined the times before appointed, and the bounds of their habitations.* For what end hath he thus done? *That men should seek the Lord, if haply they may feel after him, and find him, though he be not far from every one of us.* (m) Does this passage convey no idea of what God is? I think it does, as far as language is capable of conveying. I will point our candid author to another passage. *For the invisible things of him, from the creation of the world, are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even his eternal power and godhead.* (n) Does this passage give us no idea of what God is? Yes. I think as much as our author's eighteen-penny book does. Ibid. "The Christian system of faith appears to me as a species of atheism." That is a plain proof to me that you have it not; or it would appear to you the substance of things hoped for, and the evidence of things not seen.

The Christian religion is no "opaque body, no irreligious eclipse;" no, it is light in the Lord, and confirms and gives honour to every divine attribute. Nor is it an enemy to any of God's works, or the study of them; for the works of God are great, and sought out by such as have pleasure in him.

Page 27. "It is the fraud of the Christian system, to call the sciences *human inventions.*" Where does the Christian system call the sciences *human inventions?* The apostle speaks of *vain philosophy, and science, falsely so called;* but in all the sacred writings there is not one word against true science.

Page 28. We may give Mr. P. credit for all he says respecting his knowledge of the triangle, the lever and its weights, tangents, secants, &c. seeing they are

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nothing

(m) Acts xvii. 26—29.

(n) Rom. i. 20.

nothing to the purpose, only our author has a mind to flourish a little.

Page 31. "As the Christian system has made a revolution in theology, so also has it made a revolution in the state of learning." Where is the proof of this bold assertion? One fault this writer has, is that he generally speaks without book.

Nor is he very consistent in his remarks upon learning languages. He tell us, *ibid.*, "almost all the scientific learning that now exists, came to us from the Greeks, or the people who spoke the Greek language," and yet, he tells us, "the languages are become useless, and the time of teaching them is wasted." Let them make sense of this who can. Nor do I see what it has to do with Christianity. But our author soon turns from this grave subject of languages, &c. to his merry conceit of "Eve, the snake, and the apple," page 33, which diverts him wonderfully; and so does the "amphibious idea of a man-god," &c. We have in England a set of practitioners, whom we call mountebanks; each of these is furnished with an agent, whom we indifferently term the fool, merry-andrew, pickled-herring, and the like; this genius cuts a grotesque figure, suited to the part he is to act. His business is to make the crowd laugh, partly by making wry faces, odd postures, and abundance of loggerly wit, turning every thing he takes in hand into buffoonery and ridicule. This is exactly the case with Mr. P. and one would almost imagine the infidels in Paris had engaged him for some such purpose, as the English quack engages his merry-andrew; his talent seems to be of that kind, and is well calculated to set the half-thinking rabble a laughing very loudly. His "devil in the pit, and Eve, snake, and the apple," are admirable strokes of eloquence, and will unexceptionably supply the place of a fiddler in the smokey alehouse. Now what subject is there that a man of this cast may not turn into sneer and contempt? such jargon passes for reasoning with such readers as will be diverted with our comic author. But would it not be well for him to spare his Creator? and let religion alone till he has learned to know what it is? Let the potsherds strive with the potsherds; but let

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not an ignorant worm of the earth turn witling upon his Maker. But we must trace him a little further.

Page 33. "The setter-up, therefore, and the advocates of the Christian system of faith, could not but foresee that the continual progressive knowledge that man would gain by the aid of science, of the power and wisdom of God manifested in the structure of the universe, and in all the works of creation, would militate against and call in question the truth of their system of faith; and therefore it became necessary to their purpose to cut learning down to a size less dangerous to their project?" Might not one from hence conclude, that all the advocates for Christianity were a set of illiterate idiots? Did such men as Bacon, Milton, Newton, Boyle, Locke, and multitudes besides, cut down science to a less size? Were not all these advocates for "the Christian system of faith." Who then were the advocates for the Christian system, who were for cutting down science? Till our author has produced his proofs, must he not stand on record as an infamous slanderer?

His "earth and flat trencher," are diverting inventions too, page 34, and he must hang these upon Christianity, as the merry-andrew puts on his patched coat. But can he produce one Christian author that ever asserted that the earth was like "a flat trencher?" Did not the above named authors know the structure of the world as well as Mr. P. could tell them? Nay, if Mr. P. has any knowledge of the matter, did he not gain it from some of those "advocates for the Christian system?"

Page 35. "Latter times have laid all the blame upon the Goths and Vandals; but, however unwilling the partisans of the Christian system may be to believe or acknowledge it, it is nevertheless true, that the age of ignorance commenced with the Christian system." This gentleman continually forgets one thing, that dogmatical assertions are no proofs. Let him prove that the age of ignorance commenced with the Christian system; or, if he cannot prove it, let him stand confessed a vile slanderer.

It is well known that the Augustan age was remarkable for its learning, and that was the time in which our

our Saviour appeared. Learning flourished for several centuries, and several of the Christian fathers, as Origin, Tertullian, Chrysostom, &c. were men of considerable learning. Learning continued to flourish till the empire was broken to pieces, and then true Christianity sunk into superstition, from which it is not yet fully recovered.

Mr. P.'s pedigree of gods, in his note, page 35, has nothing to do with either revealed, or practical Christianity. If revealed religion has been made a handle for that purpose, it only shews that any good thing is capable of abuse. If some have been so stupid as to adore the sun and moon, the fault was not in those luminaries, but in the blind and depraved minds of those idolators. Very likely they might be originally of Mr. P.'s creed, would admit of no other revelation than that of creation, and so become vain in their imaginations, and thereby mistook the copy for the original, the native tendency of our author's sentiments, and will lead its devotees to positive idolatry, or to materialism. This shews the necessity of a revelation, well authenticated, that poor blind mortals may not mistake the effect for the cause. It appears a doubt with me, notwithstanding the contempt which our author affects to cast on the first chapter of Genesis, whether he would not have stuck fast in the creation, if he had never read that chapter; it does not appear that he would have had sagacity enough to have found out the Creator. At present he seems far from being very clear; if there is any Deity which he adores, it is himself, and his fancied reason.

Page 36. "It is an inconsistency, scarcely possible to be credited, that any thing should exist under the name of a religion, that held it irreligious to study and contemplate the structure of the universe that God had made." Very true. But who are they that did so? Not the prophets; not Jesus Christ, Mr. P. himself being judge, page 26; not the apostles, not even excepting that quibbling *Paul*, our author speaks of, as he may see, Acts xvii. Rom. i.; not any Christian philosopher or divine. The persecutors of Galileo and Vigilius were no more Christians than Mr. P. himself is. I have already mentioned several excellent Christian philosophers,

philosophers, who studied and wrote in defence of Christianity, yet studied the structure of the universe as much, and to as good purpose, as ever our author did. Christianity is in no respect hostile to the works of creation. We do not make void the handy-work of God in the creation, through faith; no, we establish it.

Page 38. We are obliged to Mr. P. for the history which he gives us of himself; it may be all true for any thing I know, only it has little connection with the subject in hand, save the story of the sermon which he heard, "when he was about seven or eight years of age, upon redemption by the death of the Son of God, and his reflections thereon in the garden." It seems he then thought as a child, he reasoned as a child; and, now when he is become a man, yea, an old man, and should have put away childish things, he speaks and writes as a child still. Must Mr. P. pick up a few trite thread-bare expressions, and so string them together, in order that he may make religion look ridiculous and frightful to us? No. It is only imitating the rude soldiers, who spit in the lovely face of our ever adorable Redeemer.

Page 39. "Any system of religion, that has any thing in it that shocks the mind of a child, cannot be a true system." Why do not you prove it? Punishment for crimes, either in this or another world, may shock a child, nevertheless is true.

Ibid. "The Christian mythology has five Deities; there is God the Father, God the Son, God the Holy Ghost, the God Providence, and the Goddess Nature." In what part of the Scriptures is this blasphemy written? If it is the Christian mythology, it must be found in the New Testament: but where? Is Mr. P. acting the fool or the knave here? How far his system quadrates with that of the Quakers, I cannot tell. There are sensible men among them, who can answer for themselves?

Page 40. Our author was informing us, upon a full stretch, concerning his progress in philosophy; but the merry conceit of the snake, Eve, and the apple, has such an attraction, that, like an overpowering vortex, its force is irresistible; but why should that lively story directly lead him to banter upon the death of the Son of God?

Does he take delight in crucifying him afresh, and again put him to open shame?

All he says for several pages, respecting the form of the earth, its magnitude, the sun, the planets, and stars, &c. has nothing new in it, nor inconsistent with the redemption of the world by our Lord Jesus Christ.

Page 46. "From whence then could arise the solitary and strange conceit, that the Almighty, who had millions of worlds equally dependent upon his protection, should quit the care of all the rest, and come to die in our world, because they say, one man and one woman had eaten an apple." But who have raised "that solitary and strange conceit of the Almighty quitting the care of all other worlds," &c. It is not in any part of the Bible. The doctrine of the Bible runs thus, *the eyes of the Lord are in every place, beholding the evil and the good. Whither shall I go from thy spirit? or whither shall I fly from thy presence? If I ascend up to heaven, thou art there; if I make my bed in hell, behold thou art there.* Are Mr. Paine's boasted notions of the Deity sunk so low, as to shrivel him into a mere local existence, that while he is taking care of one place, he must abandon another? Is such a notion to the honour, or consistent with the attribute of omnipresence? How different is the doctrine of him, who, Mr. P. says, taught the purest morality? who says, *where two or three are met in my name, I am in the midst of them.*

Ibid. Here again we have the merry tale of the snake, Eve, and the apple. Perhaps one might ask without offence, who informed Mr. P. that it was an apple which Eve ate?

As to the state of other worlds, we have nothing to do with them. We believe the Almighty is the moral Governor of all his rational creatures in all worlds. Before we aspire to know what is doing in other worlds, we should learn more of the state of this in which we live, yea, I might say, the smallest and most ostensible part of it. I could ask even Mr. P. with all his boast of science, more questions concerning a fly, a mite, yea, a grain of sand, than he will be capable of answering me as long as he lives. It is, and has been, by losing sight of Christianity, "that so many wild and whimsical

l systems of faith, and of religion, have been fabricated and set up," and thereby many have turned sceptics, deists, materialists, and infidels.

Page 47. "It is with a pious fraud, as with a bad action, it begets a calamitous necessity of going on." every inventor of fraud or imposture has some hope of profit, or honour before him. Now which of these could either Christ or his apostles propose to themselves? or any of the primitive Christians, during the three first centuries? It was when the church was alienated from Christianity, that it became a persecutor of either the sciences, or such as were pious.

Ibid. "Our author has found out three principal means which have been employed to impose upon all mankind in all ages, and perhaps in all countries, mystery, miracle, and prophecy." The first of these he answers himself. "Every thing we behold is a mystery to us. Our own existence is a mystery, the whole vegetable world is a mystery to us." Very well. And will not this apply to religion? Most certainly.

Page 48. "The fact, however, as distinct from the operating cause, is not a mystery, because we see it." The very same is the case in religion. It is the operating cause" that is the mystery. Real Christianity is as visible, as the stately oak, or the corn that grows. I may say, that vegetation is as great a mystery to a Greenlander, who has never been out of his ice and snow, as Christianity is to Mr. P. All the lovely verdure and fragrance in the vernal creation, is incredible to the former, so is the spirit and life of real religion to the latter. Must I deny the beauties of spring, because a poor Greenlander, or wild Laplander, makes it into his head to laugh them to scorn? Mr. P. will say, no. And must I call in question the word of God, because Mr. P. cannot see into the truth of it, and because he has taken it into his head to ridicule it? Suppose Mr. P. had engaged a poor ignorant Indian, who had never heard tell of either reading or writing: supposing he writes a letter, and sends this savage ten or twenty miles with it, and he finds this letter has given Mr. P.'s correspondent all due information respecting its contents; must not the whole of this writing be very mysterious to poor Lury? And as Mr. P.

has

has signified that the devil has imps, page 52; might not the poor fellow be tempted to think his master had wrapped up one of the imps in the paper which he carried which could give such accurate information? All perfect mystery to him. Thus the whole of what mysterious is such to us, because we are ignorant of the wisdom and power of the divine operations. Tell a inhabitant of the torrid zone, who has never heard tell of frost, that in our country, the surface of the water sometimes so hard, that people can walk over rivers yea, that horses and carriages can go over, and that the surface of the water is as hard as a rock; and what would he think? Let him have a little of Mr. P. mercury in his head, and he will treat you as Mr. P. does Christianity, and as he does the circumstance of the fish swallowing Jonas. Therefore all his flourishes of "fog, lingo, legerdemain; his ghosts and spectres of Paris; his trite phrases of fabricating, manufacturing his merry conceits of the snake, Eve, and the apple; his wonderful inversion of the story of Jonah swallowing the whale," and his more daring mockery of the redemption of the world by the death and passion of our ever adorable Immanuel, all proceed from one source however unwilling our author may be to think so, that is, his own *ignorance*.

But he really says and unsays. Page 49. "What is to be understood by a miracle? In the same sense that every thing is said to be a mystery, so also it may be said to be a miracle. The elephant, though larger, is not greater miracle than a mite; nor a mountain a greater miracle than an atom. To an almighty power, it is no more difficult to make one than the other, and no more difficult to make a million of worlds than one. It is no miracle when compared to our power and comprehension. It is not a miracle, when compared to the power that performs it." *Recte domine.* And why does not this satisfy Mr. P.? Why must he in drollery unsay all this again? A miracle is, therefore, something beyond our comprehension; and that such things have been done I firmly believe. If I saw Mr. P. cure an inveterate disease by a touch or a word, I should call it a miracle. If I should see him feed and satisfy ten or fifteen thousand people, with as much provision as a lad could carry, I should call it a miracle. If I should see him

call a dead man out of his grave, I should call it a miracle. Pretended miracles are no objections against real ones, any more than counterfeit coin is to that which is sterling. Our Saviour's miracles were miracles of mercy, and were performed in the presence of multitudes. The times, places, and circumstances are all so clearly marked out, that if they had been mere jugglements, or false reports, they would have been detected, and long since exposed to derision and scorn.

Page 52. As to the case of Jonah, the miracle does not consist in the fish swallowing him, for that was no miracle at all; the miracle was in his being preserved alive in the belly of the fish. Nor was there any necessity for the fish to carry Jonah to Nineveh, as our author wildly speaks, the people repented through the preaching of Jonah, without such a miracle; and whether our author will believe that Christ repeated the circumstance of Jonah, or no, it is of no consequence to mankind, seeing the truth does not depend upon his faith in that matter; it will be believed, when Mr. P. and his drollery will be forgotten. But he must bring in a very witty parenthesis. "The most extraordinary of all things related in the New Testament, is that of the devil flying with Jesus Christ, and shewing him all the kingdoms of the world. How happened it that he did not show him America?" Where is it written in the New Testament that the devil did fly away with him? And how know you that he did not show him America?

Ibid. Mr. P. thinks miracles unnecessary; the Almighty thinks otherwise; yea, and Mr. P. thinks so too at times, as we have seen above; and so he repeats it again with his "long bow of a thousand years."

Page 53. "It has been shewn in a former part of this work, that the original meaning of the word *prophet* and *prophesying*, has been changed; and that a prophet, in the sense the word is now used, is a creature of a modern invention." And it has been shewn in a former part of this answer, that that is a mistake; a wrong representation, and a creature of Mr. P.'s imagination; nor is it of a very modern date, seeing Abraham is called a prophet, though Mr. P. informs us he could neither play nor make verses.

Ibid.

Ibid. "Every thing unintelligible was prophetical, and every thing insignificant was typical." Should not this bold assertion have had some proof? After so much said against superstition and credulity, one would have thought that Mr. P. should have marked all his way with undeniable evidence; instead of that, he has metamorphosed himself into a pope, and boldly contradicts both God and man; giving out his own dogmas for infallible demonstrations; and confidently asserts concerning ages that are past, that "a blunder would have served them for a prophecy, and a dish-clout for a type." Smartly said! Is not this elegant? Hark! how his disciples in the alehouse roar out the loggerdly laugh! Is this the man that ventures to contradict revelation, and make into mere idiots some of the greatest ornaments for literature that this or any other age ever produced? All must bow down to what Mr. P. has got the confidence to affirm.

Page 54. "If there were such men," that is, prophets, "it is consistent to believe, that the event so communicated, would be told in terms that could be understood, and not related in such a loose and obscure manner, as to be out of the comprehension of those that heard it, and so equivocal, as to fit almost any circumstance that might happen afterwards—yet all things called prophecies, in the book called the Bible, come under this description."

In what manner must our casuist have read the Bible? Was he awake? or were his eyes open? To say nothing of the difference of language, that is, of translating one language into another, and the impropriety of plainly saying what related to princes and states while existing, and the eastern manner of speaking much in the parabolical way; I say, considering these things, it is astonishing to me how clear and express many of the prophecies are. To enumerate these, would swell this pamphlet beyond all due bounds. Nor is there any necessity; it is done. Read Rollin, Prideaux, Newton, and various others on that subject, and they will see how exactly the prophecies and their accomplishment correspond; insomuch that some cavillers have asserted, that those prophecies were made after the events happened, they fitted so exactly. However,

ever, I will point out two or three, just to give the reader a taste, wishing him to read the above authors, who have written expressly upon the subject. I will not touch upon those prophecies which relate to our Saviour, but only such as relate to the downfall of nations. How clearly is the return of the Israelites spoken of from the Babylonish captivity, and their very deliverer expressed by name? Compare *Isaiah* xlv. 1, 2, 3 verses, with *Ezra* i. And *Jer.* xxxii. 34 (chap. li. 27—32). Can language be plainer? Now the prophet Isaiah lived near two hundred years before his prediction was fulfilled; and Jeremiah was dead a considerable time before the event happened. To instance in the case of the destruction of Babylon, take the following description. "Babylon, the glory of kingdoms, the beauty of the Chaldees excellency, shall be as when God overthrew Sodom and Gomorrah. It shall never be inhabited; neither shall it be dwelt in from generation to generation; neither shall the Arabian pitch his tent there, neither shall the shepherds make their fold there. But wild beasts of the desert shall lie there; and their houses shall be full of doleful creatures, and owls shall dwell there, and satyrs shall dance there, and the wild beasts of the islands shall cry in their desolate houses, and dragons in their pleasant palaces," *Isa. xiii. 19—22.* I think words cannot well be plainer; and that they are true, our late travellers testify. Nor is there any thing equivocal in them; they are not applicable to any other circumstance; not even to the destruction of Jerusalem.

Let us next see what the prophets say concerning Tyrus, at that time the pride of nations. See her wealth and grandeur described, *Ezekiel*, chapters xxvii. and xxviii. And what is the result of all this pomp of riches? Mark, she had been a scoffer at God's people, like Mr. P. "Therefore, thus saith the Lord God; Behold, I am against thee, O Tyrus, and will cause many nations to come up against thee, as the sea causeth his waves to come up. And they shall destroy the walls of Tyrus, and break down her towers. I will also scrape her dust from her (her soil that made her elegant gardens) and make her like the top of a rock. It shall be a place for spreading of nets in the midst of the

the sea: for I have spoken it, saith the Lord God; and it shall become a spoil to nations," Ezek. xxiv. 3—6. Is not this language express and clear? Can any thing be more so? And is it not verified? Do not travellers testify the same? Nebuchadnezzar made the first attack upon it, and although it in some degree recovered, yet Alexander accomplished the prophecy in its full extent. Now here are two express testimonies, point-blank, against Mr. P.'s daring assertions. See likewise Daniel's vision of the image, and his own interpretation, Dani. ii. 31—46. His vision, also, of the ram and the goat, chapter viii. Need any thing be plainer?

If we step forward to the New Testament, we shall find things as clear as an impartial reader can wish for. Attend to our Blessed Lord's prophecy over Jerusalem. "And when he was come near, he beheld the city, and wept over it. Saying, if thou hadst known, even thou, at least in this thy day, the things which belong to thy peace! but now they are hid from thine eyes. For the days shall come upon thee, that thine enemies shall cast a trench about thee, and compass thee round, and keep thee on every side. And shall lay thee even with the ground, and thy children within thee: and shall not leave thee one stone upon another: because thou knewest not the time of thy visitation," Luke xix. 41—45. Thus speaks that blessed Saviour of sinners, whom Mr. P. has treated with such sneering contempt. And as for the fulfilment, I refer my reader to Josephus, who has so minutely delineated the accomplishment, in his History of the Jewish Wars. And as he lived and died a Jew, there is little reason to think that he had any league with the Christians. There is another prophecy or two in the New Testament, which I shall take the liberty to cite, and the more so, because Mr. P. himself has completely fulfilled them. "That quibbler, Paul," as our modest author stiles him, is taking his leave of the elders of the church at Ephesus, and observes, *for I know this, that after my departing, shall grievous wolves enter in among you, not sparing the flock.* Let Mr. P. understand. *Also of yourselves shall men arise, speaking perverse things, to draw away disciples after them. For men shall be lovers of their own selves, covetous,*

ous, boasters, proud, blasphemers, disobedient, truce-breakers, false accusers, incontinent, fierce, despisers of those that are good. Traitors, heady, high-minded, lovers of pleasure more than lovers of God. As *Jannes and Jambres* withstood Moses, so do these also resist the truth: men of corrupt minds, reprobate concerning the faith. I think these are terms that may be understood; nor does it need any very extraordinary sagacity to see that they are very applicable in the present case. There is another prophecy not hard to be understood. *There shall come in the last days scoffers, walking after their own lusts, and saying, Where is the promise of his coming? for since the fathers fell asleep, all things continue as they were from the beginning of the creation.*

I have now taken notice of all that is material in Mr. P.'s performance, and have drawn out this pamphlet to a much greater length than I intended. But I wish to make an observation or two more.

The first is, that Mr. P. and all the deistical writers which I have read, lie under one capital mistake, which is the source of all their blunders: they do not understand what Christianity is; they take the name for the thing, and it must be confessed that too many who are called Christians have led them into this fatal mistake. "The pomp of revenue, the invention of purgatory, the releasing of souls from thence by prayers of the church with money, the selling of pardons, dispensations, and indulgences," with a hundred things more which Mr. P. might mention, are all beside the mark. Such are selfish human inventions; the shameful abuses which have crept in, and are no more to be ascribed to Christianity, than the knavery of counterfeit coin is to be imputed to that which is sterling; or the nocturnal debaucheries of the sensualist are to be imputed to the shining sun.

Religion, or Christianity, is this, thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and thy neighbour as thyself. It is doing justly, loving mercy, and walking humbly with God. Our divine lawgiver says, whatsoever ye would that men should do to you, that do ye also. For that is the sum of what is contained in the law and the prophets. It is a wisdom which cometh from above, and is pure and peaceable, gentle, and easy

to be entreated, full of mercy and good fruits, without partiality, and without hypocrisy. It is the abhorrence of that which is evil, and the cleaving to that which is good. It therefore no more consists in a name, a sect, a party, or an opinion, than it consists in a string of beads. It has no more to do with the intrigues of worldly states, or the cabals of politicians, than it has with the inhabitants of Saturn. Its blessed Author declared his kingdom was not of this world. And when he engaged his disciples, was it with magnificent offers of either worldly wealth or honour? Far from it. Hear what he says, *If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow me. Ye shall be put out of their synagogues, yea, the time will come, when he that killeth you, will think that he doeth God service.* Now what pomp or revenue was there in all this? What temptation was there here to induce men to quibble, or to "manufacture quibbles," or carry on "fraud and imposture?" Did not the servants of this faithful Lord find every thing true? I expect some of my readers will believe the testimony which they have left behind them. Then hear what one of them says, *we are troubled on every side, yet not distressed; perplexed, but not in despair; persecuted, but not forsaken; cast down, but not destroyed; always bearing about in the body the dying of the Lord Jesus, that the life also of Jesus might be made manifest in our body. For we which live, are always delivered unto death, for Jesus' sake, that the life also of Jesus might be made manifest in our mortal flesh,* 2 Cor. iv. 8—12. See what the same writer says, 2 Cor. 11, 23, to the end. See the Acts of the Apostles. Now what temptation had these men "to manufacture quibbles, or invent frauds and impostures?" I doubt if Mr. P. must endure such a life of martyrdom for being a deist, whether he would not turn christian; or if he should be so treated for being a patriot, whether he would not turn loyalist. Thus we see there is a difference between christianity and those that make profession of it; and true christianity cannot with justice be charged with the faults of such as make a profession of it. As to national christianity, I, for one, think as little of it as Mr. P. can do. Let popery or mahometanism, or judaism be set up for national religion,

gion, and it will be sure to have a large majority. Let any one read our English history from the year 1533 to 1560, and he will find the national religion changed four times, and the whole nation, a few excepted, changed with it. And the thousands who are now bawling for church and king, would turn into the opposite strain if there were neither church nor king.

The second observation I wish to make, and that is, the different effects that deism and real christianity have upon the lives and habits of mankind. Shew me one instance of a poor profligate sinner being truly reformed by embracing deism. The man that was under the power of drunkenness, uncleanness, envy, malice, revenge; who was a bad husband, parent, child, neighbour, &c. and I hope Mr. P. will not plead for such a conduct; now shew me one of these who has been thoroughly reformed so as to become a good husband, parent, son, or neighbour, by the principles of deism; shew me one sinner who has been truly changed. Now, all thanks to a despised Saviour! I can produce thousands who have been savingly turned from the error of their way, by hearing and believing the gospel; who have been brought out of darkness into God's marvellous light; and multitudes have endured to their last gasp, blessing God for a precious Christ and for his gospel. Tell me where did the deist live or die who was put to death for his principles, whose life was blameless? And who rejoiced in his torments? I have not read of one. But history abounds with instances of pious christians who took joyfully the spoiling of their goods, and finished their lives at a gibbet or in the flames. Cannot Mr. P. find something in the torments of our dying champions to act the droll upon? I can this day shew Mr. P. a considerable number of men, whose talents might have raised them to eminence in the world, had they turned them to secular matters, and yet are devoting themselves and their time and abilities to seek after lost sinners; who are enduring the cross and despising the shame, who are often very poorly accommodated, even with the necessaries of life; but if they are faithful to the end, will have many saved souls for a crown of rejoicing in the day of the Lord.

The third thing I shall notice, and that is, there are no

no new arguments in Mr. P.'s *Age of Reason*, only they are a kind of Farrago warmed up, and a little seasoning put in, suitable to the folly of the age, and with a little sophistry, and much burlesque, have tickled the fancy of many half thinkers. Nor has he taken any notice of the able answers which have been given to what Herbert, Chubb, Woolleston, Hobbs, Hume, Voltaire, and others of that tribe, have written. These have been sufficiently confuted by Dr Leland, Mr. West, Dr. Campbell, and various others, who have produced solid arguments, and not buffoonery. In Mr. P. we have nothing but misrepresentations, positive assertions, bare faced untruths, yet delivered with all the confidence of the infallible chair. The other deistical writers treat our Saviour and his apostles somewhat like the Jewish sanhedrim; but Mr. P. treats the fountain of wisdom as Herod and his men when they dressed him up as an ideot. My advice to Mr. P. is, that before he tries his talent of scurrility against Christianity again, that he will obtain a better acquaintance with its nature and importance, lest its abused author deal with him according to his folly.

Before I close these remarks, I beg leave to notice, that I avow myself no adept in politics, yet if I can form any judgment of Mr. P.'s political writings, they seem calculated to fill this nation with such a scene of confusion, anarchy, distresses, and calamities, as never were known since it was called Britain. I will not say, I am right, but such are my thoughts; nor can I see any other tendency they have. Many who have espoused his political tenets, are no credit to either their oracle, themselves, or their country. Several, to my knowledge, have got all the property they could into their hands, and, under a pretence of being dissatisfied with the government, have decamped, and left their creditors to consult their own reflections.

Perhaps some may say, Mr. P. could not help that; very true, but I know not how far such a conduct may be connected with the doctrine of the *Rights of Man*. Interest is a powerful motive, and will catch at every shadow to draw inferences in its own favour. However, such are my thoughts respecting Mr. P.'s political works; but as politics are not my province, I should never have put pen to paper concerning Mr. P., had

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he let religion alone, a subject I am sure he is a stranger to; and I really suspect he is no mighty adept in science, though he has catched a few terms, and writes with great confidence. Be that as it may, religion is out of the question, and hence the motto in the title, which may be rendered, "let not the cobler go beyond his last," is an admonition to men, not to meddle with any thing above their capacity. As I think Mr. P. a mere plagiarist in matters of science, so even in his favourite scheme of deism, he is only like one that keeps a rag-shop; he has only second-hand goods; he has advanced nothing new, except his profane tinsel wit, or idle scurrility. I apprehend every thing he has advanced in what may be called argument, is prior to himself, and much was advanced in the last century and beginning of this, by Hobbs, Chubb, Toland, Morgan, Woollaston, Shaftsbury, Bolingbroke, &c. and have been sufficiently answered by Dr. Leland, Mr. West, and various others; and which our author either has not read, or had not good sense enough to understand, or take notice of. For certainly, in all reason, those answers should either have been refuted, or submitted to, and not the very doctrines which they confute, brought forward again. But this gentleman dashes forward, affecting to treat every thing with disdain that stands in his way. Such is the conduct of the Pope and the Grand Signior.

As to the "pomp of revenue, and the terror of national establishments," they are matters which I have nothing to do with, I am in no danger of either one or the other, nor do they affect either Christianity, or the New Testament. The purest ages of Christ knew nothing of them, and it would have been happy for Christianity if they never had been known. Real Christians are subject to him whose kingdom neither was nor is of this world; and the less his servants have to do with "the pomp of revenue, and terror of human establishments," the better.

It is no small proof to me, that the Bible is the Word of God, in that it has had bad men for its enemies of every description, who have laboured with all their might to destroy it; yet it never could be destroyed. In the times of heathen persecution, especially that of

Trajan,

Trajan, both the Old and New Testament were eagerly sought after, that they might be destroyed; and, if I mistake not, the Christians were called upon to deliver up those books at the peril of their lives; and some were so intimidated, that they did deliver them up, but they were branded by a term of reproach (x), and excommunicated. The Turks also have exerted all their force to destroy the Bible, so that no one durst be known to have that hated book in their dominions. Likewise the Papists have made every effort that cruelty and craft could devise, to banish that detested book, and not being able, they have found out a way of setting it aside, by substituting the legends of their church, the decrees of their councils, instead of the Word of God. Thus we find Heathens, Turks, and Papists, however they disagree in other respects, they can agree in this, to become a triple alliance in attempting to make the Word of God of none effect. The deist, in this respect, joins them. The Heathen have their fables, the Turks their koran, and the Papists their infallible decrees, and the Deists spike up their inch of reason, as one expresses it, upon the point of philosophic wit, called argument, and the whole tribe wrangle themselves into infidels.

Well-read persons will never be hurt by any thing that Mr. B. has written, or is capable of writing; they know all, and much more than he is capable of telling them; and I am inclined to think no sensible well-read Deist will thank him for his labour. He has not added one idea to their creed, only mere stale repetitions: hence I compare him to the shop-keeper in Rag-fair; he only deals in old cast articles. His admirers are only of the small craft, the little witlings of the day. It is not the man of reason, but the buffoon that is admired; nor the doctor, nor his medicines, but the merry-andrew; and the danger lies in the simple and unwary being hurt, who have not time, nor perhaps abilities to investigate the futility, or see through the empty drollery and profane ridicule which make up the principal part of those vain pamphlets; and had I been sure they would not have fallen into the hands of such, I should not have troubled myself about them. But I have met with several who seemed half staggered, some who had

(x) Traditores, i.e. Traitors.

just escaped the pollution that is in the world, who were beginning to live like rationals, who desire to do justly, love mercy, and walk humbly with God, and for their sakes I have attempted to put this antidote into their hands; not being willing that a stumbling-block should be put before the blind, or the lame turned out of the way. I wish such honest sincere souls to keep near the God of their salvation, and all the folly of men, called wit, can never hurt them. Through the preaching of the despised cross of Christ, many, very many, are become new creatures, old things are passed away, and all things are become new. They find to their unspeakable comfort, that godliness is profitable to all things; their families also feel the comfort of this blessed change, by enjoying the fruit of their honest labour, by which they have the comfortable necessaries of life, which before they had not. Did deism ever make such a change in men? Where are they? Shew us the men. I agree with Mr. P. that our Saviour taught the purest morality, and I think sound philosophy, and he says, "the tree is known by its fruits." I see the fruits of deism are scorn, ridicule, infidelity, dishonesty, revelling, drunkenness, chambering, wantonness. On the other hand I see the fruit of the spirit is love, joy, peace, gentleness, goodness, meekness, fidelity, and sincerity, and truth.

Perhaps some will object, that there are many called Christians, who bear no such marks; very true, but such do not make the Bible their rule; therefore, the Bible is not in the fault; nay, there the misfortune lies; they treat the Bible in the same manner Mr. P. does; they either neglect it, or misunderstand it; they do not walk by that sacred rule, they walk after the flesh, and only pursue the same. It is matter of lamentation that it is so; and Mr. P.'s very injudicious writings are calculated to lull them asleep in the state they are in.

But let the followers of Jesus look to their blessed example, so shall they go from faith to faith, and from conquering to conquer, till at last they sing aloud, Nay, in all these things, we are more than conquerors through him that loved us!

F I N I S.

Just

Just as I had finished this pamphlet, I saw three sermons, published by J. Auchincloss, D. D. which so entirely meet my sentiments, for the most part, that he has actually forestalled some things which I had written upon the very same text. His marginal Remarks upon Paine are pertinent, and so coincident with my own thoughts, that we have almost hit upon the same words. I have not the pleasure of knowing Dr. Auchincloss, not hearing of his name before; but I wish him success in every attack against infidelity.

Published by, T. Taylor, 10, Pall Mall, London. Price 12s. 6d. 1838.

3d. The History of the Waldenses and Albigenses; price
two shillings and six-pence, sewed. 12mo 1 bound 10s

And shortly will be published, an Answer to the
second part of Mr. Paine's Age of Reason; price six-
pence.